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JC714 U.S. PTO
12/16/99

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Inventorship..... Omoigui
Applicant..... Microsoft Corporation
Attorney's Docket No. MS1-364US
Title: Live Presentation Searching

TRANSMITTAL LETTER AND CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

To: Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231
From: Allan T. Sponseller (509) 324-9256
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JC688 U.S. PTO
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12/16/99

The following enumerated items accompany this transmittal letter and are being submitted for the matter identified in the above caption.

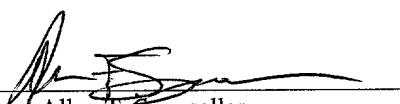
1. Transmittal Letter with Certificate of Mailing included.
2. PTO Return Postcard Receipt
3. Fee Transmittal
4. New patent application (title page plus 34 pages, including claims 1-57 & Abstract)
5. Executed Declaration
6. 6 sheets of formal drawings (Figs. 1-6)
7. Assignment w/Recordation Cover Sheet

Large Entity Status [x] Small Entity Status []

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of fees or credit overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-0463 in connection with any patent application filing fees under 37 CFR 1.16, and any processing fees under 37 CFR 1.17.

Date: 12/16/99

By:


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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

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Date: 12/16/1999

By: Lori A. Vierra
Lori A. Vierra

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
APPLICATION FOR LETTERS PATENT

Live Presentation Searching

Inventor(s):
Nosakhare D. Omoigui

ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NO. MS1-364US

1 **TECHNICAL FIELD**

2 This invention relates to networked client/server systems and to methods of
3 delivering and rendering live content in such systems. More particularly, the
4 invention relates to searching for live presentations.

5 **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

6 The advent of computers and their continued technological advancement
7 has revolutionized the manner in which people work and live. Information that
8 used to be available only in written or verbal form is becoming increasingly
9 available in electronic form. Furthermore, presentations which used to be
10 available only on particular recording media (e.g., film or tape) or via television
11 broadcasts are now available in digital form (e.g., over the Internet).

12 One problem encountered by users when faced with this continually
13 increasing mass of digital information is the ability to locate particular information
14 that the user is interested in. For example, trying to locate a particular presentation
15 can be difficult and cumbersome for users. Various search mechanisms exist for
16 pre-recorded “on-demand” presentations (e.g., various world wide web search
17 engines). On-demand presentations are fairly easily searchable because the
18 underlying data of the presentation is already known. However, in the case of live
19 presentations, such underlying data is not known because, as the presentation is
20 live, the underlying data is not available yet.

21 Some systems do exist that allow a user to identify scheduled live
22 presentations. For example, a television programming guide may be available
23 over the Internet that allows a user to search for television programs that are
24 scheduled to be broadcast (e.g., via cable, satellite system, or typical television

1 broadcast frequencies, such as UHF or VHF) and their associated broadcast times.
2 However, such programming guides typically do not provide the flexibility to
3 allow non-scheduled programs to be identified to the user. Furthermore, such
4 programming guides are typically limited to television broadcasts and do not allow
5 users to identify presentations from any of the wide variety of alternate sources
6 (such as via the Internet).

7 The invention described below addresses these disadvantages, providing a
8 way to search for live presentations.

9

10 **SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

11 In a networked client/server system, live presentations can be streamed
12 from an encoder or other server to a client computer. Additionally, information
13 describing the presentation is registered with a search server. This information is
14 made available for user searches only for as long as the information properly
15 describes the live presentation. When the information no longer describes a
16 current live presentation, the information is no longer available for searching.

17 According to one aspect of the invention, the information describes the
18 entire presentation. The information is available in the search server for user
19 searches for the duration of the presentation. Once the presentation is over, the
20 information is deleted from the search server, preventing any subsequent user
21 search requests from being satisfied using the information describing that
22 presentation.

23 According to another aspect of the invention, the information describes a
24 particular characteristic(s) of the presentation (e.g., the current topic). The
25 information for a characteristic is available in the search server for user searches

1 for as long as that characteristic describes the portion of the presentation currently
2 being presented. Once that characteristic no longer describes the portion currently
3 being presented, the information describing that characteristic is deleted from the
4 search server, preventing any subsequent user search requests from being satisfied
5 using the information describing that characteristic.

6 According to another aspect of the invention, a user can register a
7 notification request with the search server. The notification request identifies a set
8 of search criteria as well as a manner in which the user should be notified in the
9 event a live presentation matches the search criteria. The search server continues
10 to compare new information regarding available live presentations to the search
11 criteria. If a match is found, the search server notifies the user in whatever manner
12 the user requested.

13

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

14 Fig. 1 shows a client/server network system and environment in accordance
15 with one embodiment of the invention.
16

17 Fig. 2 shows a general example of a computer that can be used in
18 accordance with the invention.

19 Fig. 3 illustrates an exemplary search server in more detail.

20 Fig. 4 illustrates entries of an exemplary content database in more detail.

21 Fig. 5 shows exemplary steps in a process for allowing searching of live
22 presentations.

23 Fig. 6 shows exemplary steps in a process for allowing searching of current
24 characteristics information in live presentations.
25

1

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

2

General Network Structure

3

4 Fig. 1 shows a client/server network system and environment in accordance
5 with one embodiment of the invention. Generally, the system includes multiple
6 (n) network client computers 102, multiple (m) encoders 104, and a search server
7 106. The computers 102, encoders 104, and server 106 communicate with each
8 other over a data communications network. The communications network in Fig.
9 1 is a public network 108, such as the Internet. The data communications network
10 might also include local-area networks and/or private wide-area networks, and can
11 include both wired and wireless sections. Client computers 102, encoders 104,
12 and server 106 can communicate with one another via any of a wide variety of
13 known protocols, such as the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP).

14 Encoders 104 receive live content or presentations in the form of different
15 media streams 110. Encoders 104 can be dedicated media servers, or alternatively
16 other more general-purpose computer systems. These media streams 110 can be
17 individual media streams (e.g., audio, video, graphical, etc.), or alternatively can
18 be composite media streams including two or more of such individual streams.
19 The media streams 110 are provided to encoders on a “live” basis from other data
20 source components through dedicated communications channels or through the
21 Internet itself. Encoders 104 coordinate the streaming of the live content to other
22 components on the network 108 that request the content, such as client computers
23 102. It is to be appreciated that although the media streams are referred to as
24 being “live”, there may be a delay (e.g., between one second and thirty seconds)

1 between the time of the actual event and the time the media streams reach the
2 encoder(s).

3 There are various standards for streaming media content and composite
4 media streams. “Advanced Streaming Format” (ASF) is an example of such a
5 standard, including both accepted versions of the standard and proposed standards
6 for future adoption. ASF specifies the way in which multimedia content is stored,
7 streamed, and presented by the tools, servers, and clients of various multimedia
8 vendors. ASF provides benefits such as local and network playback, extensible
9 media types, component download, scalable media types, prioritization of streams,
10 multiple language support, environment independence, rich inter-stream
11 relationships, and expandability. Further details about ASF are available from
12 Microsoft Corporation of Redmond, Washington.

13 Encoders 104 can transmit any type of presentation over the network 108.
14 Examples of such presentations include audio/video presentations (e.g., television
15 broadcasts or presentations from a “NetShow™” server (available from Microsoft
16 Corp. of Redmond, Washington)), video-only presentations, audio-only
17 presentations, graphical or animated presentations, etc.

18 Search server 106 maintains a content database 112, a notification database
19 114, and a scheduled presentations database 116. In content database 112, server
20 106 maintains descriptive information regarding the current live content available
21 from encoders 104. A user of a client computer 102 can access search server 106
22 to search for particular live content. In notification database 114, server 106
23 maintains information regarding users of client computers 102 that have registered
24 to be notified when particular live content is available. In scheduled presentations
25

1 database 116, server 106 maintains information regarding future live presentations
2 that have been registered with server 106.

3

4 **Exemplary Computer Environment**

5 In the discussion below, the invention will be described in the general
6 context of computer-executable instructions, such as program modules, being
7 executed by one or more conventional personal computers. Generally, program
8 modules include routines, programs, objects, components, data structures, etc. that
9 perform particular tasks or implement particular abstract data types. Moreover,
10 those skilled in the art will appreciate that the invention may be practiced with
11 other computer system configurations, including hand-held devices,
12 multiprocessor systems, microprocessor-based or programmable consumer
13 electronics, network PCs, minicomputers, mainframe computers, and the like. In a
14 distributed computer environment, program modules may be located in both local
15 and remote memory storage devices.

16 Alternatively, the invention could be implemented in hardware or a
17 combination of hardware, software, and/or firmware. For example, the invention
18 could be implemented in one or more application specific integrated circuits
19 (ASICs).

20 Fig. 2 shows a general example of a computer 142 that can be used in
21 accordance with the invention. Computer 142 is shown as an example of a
22 computer that can perform the functions of any of client computers 102, server
23 encoders 104, or server 106 of Fig. 1.

1 Computer 142 includes one or more processors or processing units 144, a
2 system memory 146, and a system bus 148 that couples various system
3 components including the system memory 146 to processors 144.

4 The bus 148 represents one or more of any of several types of bus
5 structures, including a memory bus or memory controller, a peripheral bus, an
6 accelerated graphics port, and a processor or local bus using any of a variety of
7 bus architectures. The system memory includes read only memory (ROM) 150
8 and random access memory (RAM) 152. A basic input/output system (BIOS) 154,
9 containing the basic routines that help to transfer information between elements
10 within computer 142, such as during start-up, is stored in ROM 150. Computer
11 142 further includes a hard disk drive 156 for reading from and writing to a hard
12 disk, not shown, a magnetic disk drive 158 for reading from and writing to a
13 removable magnetic disk 160, and an optical disk drive 162 for reading from or
14 writing to a removable optical disk 164 such as a CD ROM or other optical media.
15 The hard disk drive 156, magnetic disk drive 158, and optical disk drive 162 are
16 connected to the system bus 148 by an SCSI interface 166 or some other
17 appropriate interface. The drives and their associated computer-readable media
18 provide nonvolatile storage of computer readable instructions, data structures,
19 program modules and other data for computer 142. Although the exemplary
20 environment described herein employs a hard disk, a removable magnetic disk 160
21 and a removable optical disk 164, it should be appreciated by those skilled in the
22 art that other types of computer readable media which can store data that is
23 accessible by a computer, such as magnetic cassettes, flash memory cards, digital
24 video disks, random access memories (RAMs) read only memories (ROM), and
25 the like, may also be used in the exemplary operating environment.

1 A number of program modules may be stored on the hard disk, magnetic
2 disk 160, optical disk 164, ROM 150, or RAM 152, including an operating system
3 170, one or more application programs 172, other program modules 174, and
4 program data 176. A user may enter commands and information into computer
5 142 through input devices such as keyboard 178 and pointing device 180. Other
6 input devices (not shown) may include a microphone, joystick, game pad, satellite
7 dish, scanner, or the like. These and other input devices are connected to the
8 processing unit 144 through an interface 182 that is coupled to the system bus. A
9 monitor 184 or other type of display device is also connected to the system bus
10 148 via an interface, such as a video adapter 186. In addition to the monitor,
11 personal computers typically include other peripheral output devices (not shown)
12 such as speakers and printers.

13 Computer 142 operates in a networked environment using logical
14 connections to one or more remote computers, such as a remote computer 188.
15 The remote computer 188 may be another personal computer, a server, a router, a
16 network PC, a peer device or other common network node, and typically includes
17 many or all of the elements described above relative to computer 142, although
18 only a memory storage device 190 has been illustrated in Fig. 2. The logical
19 connections depicted in Fig. 2 include a local area network (LAN) 192 and a wide
20 area network (WAN) 194. Such networking environments are commonplace in
21 offices, enterprise-wide computer networks, intranets, and the Internet. In the
22 described embodiment of the invention, remote computer 188 executes an Internet
23 Web browser program such as the “Internet Explorer” Web browser manufactured
24 and distributed by Microsoft Corporation of Redmond, Washington.

When used in a LAN networking environment, computer 142 is connected to the local network 192 through a network interface or adapter 196. When used in a WAN networking environment, computer 142 typically includes a modem 198 or other means for establishing communications over the wide area network 194, such as the Internet. The modem 198, which may be internal or external, is connected to the system bus 148 via a serial port interface 168. In a networked environment, program modules depicted relative to the personal computer 142, or portions thereof, may be stored in the remote memory storage device. It will be appreciated that the network connections shown are exemplary and other means of establishing a communications link between the computers may be used.

Generally, the data processors of computer 142 are programmed by means of instructions stored at different times in the various computer-readable storage media of the computer. Programs and operating systems are typically distributed, for example, on floppy disks or CD-ROMs. From there, they are installed or loaded into the secondary memory of a computer. At execution, they are loaded at least partially into the computer's primary electronic memory. The invention described herein includes these and other various types of computer-readable storage media when such media contain instructions or programs for implementing the steps described below in conjunction with a microprocessor or other data processor. The invention also includes the computer itself when programmed according to the methods and techniques described below. Furthermore, certain sub-components of the computer may be programmed to perform the functions and steps described below. The invention includes such sub-components when they are programmed as described. In addition, the invention described herein

1 includes data structures, described below, as embodied on various types of
2 memory media.

3 For purposes of illustration, programs and other executable program
4 components such as the operating system are illustrated herein as discrete blocks,
5 although it is recognized that such programs and components reside at various
6 times in different storage components of the computer, and are executed by the
7 data processor(s) of the computer.

8

9 **Search Server**

10 Fig. 3 illustrates an exemplary search server in more detail. Search server
11 106 includes a query interface 210, a registration interface 212, a search engine
12 214, and a database controller 216. Client computers 102 (Fig. 1) communicate
13 with search server 106 via query interface 210. Query interface 210 allows users
14 of client computers 102 to enter search criteria for live content. Upon receipt of a
15 search request via query interface 210, search engine 214 accesses content
16 database 112 to search for live content that matches the search criteria.

17 Encoders 104 (Fig. 1) communicate with search server 106 via registration
18 interface 212. Registration interface 212 allows encoders 104 to provide
19 descriptive information regarding the live content that they can stream to client
20 computers. This descriptive information can then be added to content database
21 112 and used for searches by search engine 214. Descriptive information can be
22 maintained by server 106 for any live content that can be provided by encoders
23 104.

1 Database controller 216 manages the databases 112, 114, and 116. This
2 management includes both adding entries to and removing entries from databases
3 112, 114, and 116.

4 Live content or presentations available from encoders 104 can be either pre-
5 scheduled or non-scheduled. Pre-scheduled presentations refer to presentations
6 that have been registered with search server 106 as occurring in the future (e.g.,
7 not already in progress and not starting within the next five minutes). Descriptive
8 information regarding pre-scheduled presentations (e.g., presentation title, key
9 words describing the content of the presentation, and encoder(s) from which the
10 presentation will be available) can be provided to server 106 from one of the
11 encoders 104 or some other source, either via the network 108 (Fig. 1) or
12 alternatively some other delivery mechanism (e.g., a magnetic or optical disk).

13 Non-scheduled presentations refer to presentations that have not been
14 registered with search server 106 as occurring in the future. A non-scheduled
15 presentation is registered with server 106 as the presentation is about to begin
16 (e.g., within the next five minutes) or shortly after it has begun. The presentation
17 can be registered by an encoder 104 (e.g., the encoder 104 that will be streaming
18 the live content), or alternatively some other source. As part of the registration
19 process, server 106 is provided with descriptive information regarding the
20 presentation.

21 Fig. 4 illustrates entries of an exemplary content database in more detail.
22 Fig. 4 is described with additional reference to components in Fig. 3. Each entry
23 in content database 112 includes data for one or more of the following fields: title
24 230, source 232, duration 234, current characteristic(s) 236, and descriptive
25 information 238. Content database 112 can be stored in volatile memory (e.g.,

1 RAM), non-volatile memory (e.g., a magnetic disk drive), or a combination
2 thereof.

3 Title field 230 includes a descriptive title of the presentation. Source field
4 232 identifies the encoder(s) 104 from which the presentation can be obtained.
5 Duration field 234 identifies, for some entries, the duration of the presentation; in
6 other entries, the duration data is not included. Characteristics field 236 optionally
7 identifies the current characteristics for the presentation (i.e., one or more
8 characteristics describing the portion of the presentation currently being presented
9 or about to be presented). Any of a wide variety of characteristics can be included
10 for the presentation, such as the current topic (as illustrated in Fig. 4), the name of
11 the current speaker, the gender of the current speaker, the color of the current
12 speaker's clothing, etc. Descriptive information field 238 provides various
13 descriptive information that describes the content of the presentation.

14 Content database 112 maintains information identifying each of the
15 currently available live presentations that is registered with server 106.
16 Information regarding pre-scheduled presentations that are not currently available
17 (or shortly will be available) from an encoder 104 is maintained in scheduled
18 database 116. Alternatively, such information could be included in content
19 database 112 and simply marked as "invalid" until the presentation is available
20 from an encoder 104.

21 In the illustrated example, each current live presentation has an associated
22 entry in database 112. When a pre-scheduled presentation is about to begin (e.g.,
23 it is scheduled to begin shortly, such as within two minutes), database controller
24 216 (Fig. 3) loads descriptive information corresponding to the presentation into
25 an entry of database 112. In the case of pre-scheduled presentations, this

1 descriptive information is loaded from pre-scheduled presentations database 116.
2 In the case of non-scheduled presentations, this descriptive information is received
3 directly from registration interface 212.

4 When a presentation is over, the entry in database 112 corresponding to the
5 presentation is deleted. Server 106 is provided with an indication of the duration
6 of a live presentation from the encoder or other device that registered the
7 presentation with server 106. In one implementation, this indication of the
8 duration is a time period or “run time” for the presentation. For example, an
9 encoder may indicate that a particular live presentation is going to be available
10 between 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. on January 1, 2000, or that a particular live
11 presentation is going to last for 45 minutes. Database controller 216 monitors
12 content database 112 for presentations whose time period or “run time” has
13 passed, and deletes the corresponding entries from database 112. According to
14 another implementation, this indication of the duration of the presentation is
15 simply a “presentation over” message or similar indicator. For example, an
16 encoder may register for a current live presentation, and then send a “presentation
17 over” message to the server 106 when the presentation has completed. Upon
18 receipt of the “presentation over” message, database controller 216 deletes the
19 entry corresponding to the presentation from database 112.

20 In one implementation of the invention, database controller 216 also
21 includes a timeout control that monitors the length of time that entries have been
22 in database 112. If a “presentation over” message is not received for a live
23 presentation within a default period of time, then controller 216 assumes that a
24 “presentation over” message was mistakenly not sent (or was lost in transit) and
25 removes the entry corresponding to the live presentation from database 112.

1 Additionally, in another implementation of the invention a presentation that
2 is scheduled for a particular duration (e.g., 90 minutes, or from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00
3 p.m.) may be extended. The duration can be extended by the encoder 104 (or
4 other device) sending a message to server 106 to change the duration in the
5 corresponding entry of database 112. For example, the message may indicate to
6 change “90 minutes” to “110 minutes”, or to change “2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.” to
7 “2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.”. Alternatively, the duration may be extended by the
8 encoder 104 (or other device) sending a message to server 106 indicating that
9 server 106 is to ignore the previously identified duration and that a “presentation
10 over” message or similar indicator will be transmitted to server 106 when the
11 presentation is over.

12 The descriptive information field 238 of an entry includes data that
13 describes the content of the corresponding presentation. In the illustrated example
14 of Fig. 4, the data includes a set of one or more key words describing the
15 presentation. Alternatively, the data could include a summary or abstract of the
16 presentation, or a textual transcript of the presentation.

17 The data for descriptive information field 238 can be generated manually or
18 automatically. Manual generation refers to an individual (e.g., the presentation
19 author) creating the data. For example, the author may write a summary or a list
20 of key words for the presentation and provide them to server 106 (either directly or
21 via an encoder 104).

22 Automatic generation refers to one of the components, such as an encoder
23 104 or server 106, using any of a variety of mechanisms to generate data
24 describing the presentation as the presentation occurs. For example, conventional
25 key word generation processes may be employed to identify key words from the

1 presentation. This may be carried out by an encoder 104, server 106, or some
2 other component coupled to network 108. By way of another example, closed
3 captioning information may be used as the data, or conventional speech-to-text
4 conversion techniques may be used to convert audio data into text data.

5 The information maintained in content database 112 is used by search
6 engine 214 to respond to search requests received from users of a client computer
7 102 (Fig. 1). A user provides, as part of his or her search request, a set of search
8 criteria and which fields the search criteria should be applied to. The user can
9 provide search requests via any of a wide variety of conventional input
10 mechanisms, such as a graphical user interface (GUI). In the illustrated example,
11 the user is able to search any of the fields in content database 214. Search engine
12 214 compares the user-provided search criteria to each entry in the database 112 to
13 determine whether the presentation corresponding to the entry satisfies the search
14 request. Any of a variety of conventional searching algorithms and methodologies
15 can be used. For example, any entry with at least one word matching one of the
16 search criteria may satisfy the search request, an entry may be required to include
17 every word in the search criteria in order to satisfy the search request, etc.

18 Information regarding presentations that satisfy a search request are
19 provided to the client computer 102 of the user that placed the request. Such
20 information may be the entire entry from database 112, or alternatively a selected
21 portion (e.g., the title field 230 and source field 232 for the entry). The source
22 field 232 is provided to the client computer to allow the user to subsequently
23 request the presentation, via the client computer, from the appropriate encoder
24 104. In the illustrated example, the data in source field 232 comprises a uniform
25

1 resource locator (URL) that identifies a particular presentation available from a
2 particular encoder.

3 Information from each entry that satisfies the search criteria is provided to
4 the user and, if multiple entries satisfy the each criteria, then the user can select
5 one or more presentations based on this information. Alternatively, server 106
6 may rank the entries based on how well they match the search criteria and return
7 information for only the highest ranking entry (or entries) to the user.

8 In addition to information describing the overall content of the presentation,
9 current “characteristic” information is also (optionally) included in database 112.
10 Characteristic information describing one or more current characteristics of the
11 presentation is registered with search server 106 by the encoder 104. When one or
12 more of the current characteristics changes, the encoder 104 registers the new
13 current characteristic(s) with server 106. Server 106, in response, changes the
14 entry in content database 112 corresponding to the presentation to identify the new
15 current characteristics (e.g., by replacing one or more of the current characteristics
16 or by adding a new characteristic(s)). By continually updating the current
17 characteristics, a user can search for particular characteristics without regard for
18 which actual presentation includes the characteristics. For example, a user may be
19 interested in discussions of Microsoft Corporation and can search for the
20 characteristics “Microsoft” or “Bill Gates” across multiple presentations registered
21 with server 106.

22 A current characteristic has a duration analogous to that of the presentation
23 discussed above. Each characteristic may have its own duration, or multiple
24 characters for a presentation may have the same duration. The duration of the
25 characteristics can be identified explicitly (e.g., the author may indicate that

1 Microsoft Corporation will be discussed from 2:07 p.m. to 2:12 p.m., or that the
2 current characteristic of Microsoft Corporation will be accurate for the next seven
3 minutes, or a “characteristic over” indicator (such as a “cancel characteristic”
4 message) may be transmitted to server 106 from encoder 104). Alternatively, the
5 duration of the characteristics can be identified implicitly (e.g., the previous
6 current characteristics are over when new current characteristics information is
7 received).

8 Current characteristics data can also be generated either manually or
9 automatically, analogous to the generation of data for descriptive information field
10 238 discussed above. For example, an algorithm may use closed captioning data
11 or a speech-to-text conversion algorithm to obtain a textual version of the
12 presentation. Key words can then be identified from the textual version and if
13 their frequency is high enough (e.g., the word “Microsoft” occurs at least a
14 threshold number of times, such as ten, within a period of time, such as sixty
15 seconds or every 500 words), then those key words are identified as the current
16 topic data.

17 Current characteristics information can be deleted from database 112 in an
18 immediate manner. That is, as soon as new current characteristics data is received,
19 the previous current characteristics data is deleted. Alternatively, the current
20 characteristic information may be “aged out” of database 112 gradually. For
21 example, if new current characteristics are identified and the key words that
22 caused the identification of the previous current characteristics are not detected
23 within a threshold amount of time (e.g., ten minutes), then the previous current
24 characteristics are deleted from database 112. This aging out can be implemented
25

1 by server 106, or alternatively can be used by encoder 104 in determining when to
2 transmit a “characteristic over” indicator to server 106.

3 Thus, using characteristics, it can be seen that the results of a search request
4 can vary depending on when during the presentation the search request is made.

5 Alternatively, the current characteristics for a presentation can be displayed
6 to the user rather than used for searching. For example, a user may submit a
7 search request that results in multiple live presentations with descriptive
8 information 238 satisfying the search criteria. Search server 106 transmits the
9 current characteristics for each of these matching live presentations (as well as
10 other information, such as title 230) to client 102 for display to the user. Search
11 server 106 also transmits any changes in the current characteristics for these
12 matching live presentations to client 102. Thus, client 102 presents to the user a
13 continually updating display of the current characteristics of the live presentations
14 that satisfy his or her search request.

15 Database controller 216 also maintains notification database 114. A user
16 can register a “notification request” with server 106 that includes a search request
17 and a notification type. The search request includes the user’s search criteria and
18 the notification type identifies how the user wants to be notified in the event a live
19 presentation begins that matches the search criteria. In one implementation, a user
20 can register an email address, a pager number, a cellular phone (or other
21 telephone) number, etc.

22 Database controller 216 receives the notification request and places the
23 search criteria and notification type in notification database 114. Database
24 controller 216 also invokes search engine 214 to determine whether any current
25 entry in content database 112 satisfies the search criteria. If a match is found, then

1 the user is notified in a manner according to the notification type. The notification
2 request may then be removed from notification database 114, or alternatively left
3 in notification database 114 to detect subsequent matches.

4 If a match is not immediately found, then database controller 216 continues
5 to invoke search engine 214 each time new information is placed in content
6 database 112. Once invoked, search engine 214 determines whether the new
7 information results in an entry that matches any of the search criteria of
8 notification requests in notification database 114. This search may be compared to
9 all entries in content database 112, or alternatively only to the entries in database
10 112 that include the new information.

11 Fig. 5 shows exemplary steps in a process for allowing searching of live
12 presentations. Steps on the left side of dashed line 250 are carried out by an
13 encoder 104 of Fig. 1, and steps on the right side of dashed line 250 are carried out
14 by search server 106 of Fig. 1. These steps may be performed in software. Fig. 5
15 is described with additional reference to components in Fig. 1.

16 Initially, encoder 104 sends identifying information for a current live
17 presentation to search server 106 (step 252). This identifying information is
18 received by server 106 (step 254), which records the information and makes the
19 information available for user searches (step 256). The identifying information is
20 used by server 106 in responding to any subsequent search requests it receives
21 (step 258).

22 While server 106 is performing steps 254 – 258, encoder 104 continues to
23 stream the live presentation to any of the client computers 102 that request it until
24 the presentation is over (steps 260 and 262). When the presentation is over,
25

1 encoder 104 stops streaming the presentation to client computers 102 and sends a
2 “presentation over” indication to server 106 (step 264).

3 Server 106 receives the “presentation over” indication from encoder 104
4 (step 266) and deletes its record of the identifying information regarding the
5 presentation (step 268). Thus, any subsequent search requests will not be
6 compared to the identifying information for that presentation, as that presentation
7 is over.

8 Alternatively, rather than relying on a “presentation over” indication in step
9 266, server 106 may be informed of the end of the presentation in other manners
10 (such as a pre-programmed duration).

11 Fig. 6 shows exemplary steps in a process for allowing searching of current
12 characteristic information in live presentations. Steps on the left side of dashed
13 line 280 are carried out by an encoder 104 of Fig. 1, and steps on the right side of
14 dashed line 280 are carried out by search server 106 of Fig. 1. These steps may be
15 performed in software. Fig. 6 is described with additional reference to
16 components in Fig. 1.

17 Initially encoder 104 sends, to search server 106, current characteristic(s)
18 information for the portion of a live presentation currently being presented (step
19 282). Search server 106 in turn receives the current characteristic(s) information
20 (step 284). Server 106 records the current characteristic(s) information and makes
21 the information available for searching (step 286). The characteristic(s)
22 information is used by server 106 in responding to any subsequent search requests
23 it receives (step 288).

24 While server 106 is performing steps 284 – 288, encoder 104 continues to
25 stream the live presentation to any of the client computers 102 that request it (step

1 290). Encoder 104 also checks whether the current characteristic(s) are over (step
2 292). When the current characteristic(s) are over (e.g., they no longer describe the
3 portion of the live presentation currently being presented), encoder 104 sends a
4 “characteristic(s) over” indication to server 106 (step 294).

5 Server 106 receives the characteristic(s) over indication from encoder 104
6 (step 296) and deletes its record of the characteristic(s) information (step 298).
7 Thus, any subsequent search requests will not be compared to the characteristic(s)
8 information for that presentation, as those characteristic(s) are over.

9

10 **Conclusion**

11 The invention allows for the searching of live presentations. An encoder
12 providing a live presentation registers with a search server, advantageously
13 making information identifying the presentation available for searching only for
14 the duration of the presentation. Additionally, characteristic information
15 identifying current characteristic(s) of the presentation can be registered with the
16 search server only for the duration of that characteristic(s). Thus, the
17 characteristic information is advantageously made available for only as long as
18 that characteristic(s) describes the current portion of the live presentation.

19 Although the invention has been described in language specific to structural
20 features and/or methodological steps, it is to be understood that the invention
21 defined in the appended claims is not necessarily limited to the specific features or
22 steps described. Rather, the specific features and steps are disclosed as preferred
23 forms of implementing the claimed invention.

1 **CLAIMS**

2 1. A system comprising:
3 a search server;
4 an encoder;
5 a client computer;
6 wherein the encoder is to provide an indication of a currently available live
7 presentation to the search server;
8 wherein the client computer is to submit a request with search criteria to the
9 search server;
10 wherein the search server is to,
11 determine whether the currently available live presentation from the
12 encoder matches the search criteria, and
13 transmit an identifier of the encoder to the client computer if the
14 currently available live presentation matches the search criteria; and
15 wherein the encoder is to provide the live presentation to the client
16 computer.

17
18 2. A system as recited in claim 1, wherein the encoder is further to
19 provide a subsequent indication to the search server indicating that the live
20 presentation is over.

21
22 3. A system as recited in claim 1, wherein the encoder further provides
23 to the search server, during the live presentation, information identifying current
24 characteristics of the live presentation.

1 **4.** A system as recited in claim 3, wherein:

2 the search server is further to transmit the information identifying current
3 characteristics of the live presentation to the client computer; and

4 the client computer is further to display the information identifying current
5 characteristics of the live presentation.

6
7 **5.** A system as recited in claim 3, wherein:

8 the information identifying current characteristics comprises a topic
9 description; and

10 the encoder provides a characteristics over indication to the search server
11 when the topic identified by the topic description is no longer being presented.

12
13 **6.** A system as recited in claim 3, wherein the information identifying
14 the current characteristics comprises text corresponding to the live presentation.

15
16 **7.** A system as recited in claim 1, wherein the live presentation
17 comprises an audio/video streaming media presentation.

18
19 **8.** A system as recited in claim 1, wherein the search server is further to:
20 maintain a record of user search requests; and
21 notify the corresponding user when a new live presentation becomes
22 available that satisfies a search request.

1 **9.** A method comprising:

2 sending, to a search server, information identifying a live presentation
3 available over a network at the beginning of the live presentation; and
4 identifying, to the search server, when the live presentation is no longer
5 available over the network.

6

7 **10.** A method as recited in claim 9, wherein the identifying comprises
8 sending, to the search server, an indication of the duration of the live presentation.

9

10 **11.** A method as recited in claim 9, wherein the identifying comprises
11 sending, to the search server, an indication of when the live presentation has
12 ended.

13

14 **12.** A method as recited in claim 9, further comprising sending, to the
15 search server, an identifier of an encoder from which the live presentation can be
16 obtained.

17

18 **13.** A method as recited in claim 12, wherein the sending the identifier
19 comprises sending, as the identifier, a uniform resource locator (URL).

20

21 **14.** A method as recited in claim 9, further comprising identifying, to
22 the search server, information indicating characteristics of a part of the live
23 presentation currently being presented.

1 **15.** A method as recited in claim 14, wherein the identifying
2 information includes sending, to the search server, an indication of the duration of
3 the characteristics.

4

5 **16.** A method as recited in claim 15, wherein the identifying
6 information comprises:

7 sending, to the search server, an indication of the characteristics when the
8 current characteristics begin to describe the live presentation; and

9 sending, to the search server, a characteristics over indication when the
10 current characteristics no longer describe the live presentation.

11

12 **17.** A method as recited in claim 9, further comprising generating the
13 information identifying the live presentation as the live presentation is presented
14 over the network.

15

16 **18.** A method as recited in claim 17, wherein the generating comprises
17 identifying key words as the live presentation is presented.

18

19 **19.** A method as recited in claim 9, further comprising using closed
20 captioning data as the information identifying the live presentation.

21

22 **20.** A method as recited in claim 9, wherein the live presentation
23 comprises a composite media stream having an audio stream and a video stream.

1 **21.** One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer
2 program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim
3 9.
4

5 **22.** A method comprising:
6 receiving information identifying a live presentation; and
7 making the information available for searching only for the duration of the
8 live presentation.
9

10 **23.** A method as recited in claim 22, wherein the receiving comprises
11 receiving information identifying a live presentation scheduled to occur in the
12 future.
13

14 **24.** A method as recited in claim 22, wherein the receiving comprises
15 receiving information identifying a currently available live presentation.
16

17 **25.** A method as recited in claim 22, further comprising:
18 receiving information identifying a plurality of live presentations; and
19 for each live presentation, making the information identifying the live
20 presentation available for searching only for the duration of the live presentation.
21

22 **26.** A method as recited in claim 25, further comprising:
23 maintaining a record of user search requests; and
24 notifying the corresponding user when a new live presentation that satisfies
25 a search request is available.
26

1
2 **27.** A method as recited in claim 26, further comprising:
3 receiving, for each of the user search requests, an indication of how the user
4 should be notified; and
5 notifying the user in accordance with the notification.

6
7 **28.** A method as recited in claim 22, wherein the receiving comprises
8 receiving the information from a same encoder as is presenting the information.

9
10 **29.** A method as recited in claim 22, wherein the making the
11 information available for searching comprises:

12 adding the information to a database of currently available live
13 presentations; and
14 deleting the information from the database when the live presentation has
15 ended.

16
17 **30.** A method as recited in claim 29, further comprising:
18 receiving a user search request; and
19 accessing the database of currently available live presentations to determine
20 whether a currently available live presentation matches the user search request.

21
22 **31.** A method as recited in claim 22, further comprising receiving an
23 indication, from an encoder that is presenting the information, that the live
24 presentation is over.

1 **32.** A method as recited in claim 22, further comprising:
2 receiving information identifying a current characteristic of the live
3 presentation; and
4 making the current characteristic available for searching for as long as the
5 characteristic describes a currently presenting portion of the live presentation.

6
7 **33.** A method as recited in claim 32, wherein the making the current
8 characteristic available for searching comprises:

9 adding the information identifying the current characteristic to a database of
10 currently available live presentations; and
11 deleting the information identifying the current characteristic from the
12 database when the characteristic no longer describes the currently presenting
13 portion of the live presentation.

14
15 **34.** A method as recited in claim 32, further comprising:
16 maintaining a record of user search requests; and
17 alerting a corresponding user when a new current characteristic that
18 satisfies a search request describes the currently presenting portion of the live
19 presentation.

20
21 **35.** A method as recited in claim 33, further comprising:
22 receiving a user search request; and
23 checking the database of currently available live presentations to determine,
24 based at least in part on the current characteristic in the database, whether a
25 currently available live presentation matches the user search request.

1 **36.** A method as recited in claim 22, further comprising:

2 receiving information identifying a current characteristic of the live
3 presentation; and

4 transmitting the information identifying the current characteristic of the live
5 presentation to a client computer.

6

7 **37.** A method as recited in claim 22, further comprising:

8 generating, based at least in part on the information identifying the live
9 presentation, descriptive information corresponding to the live presentation; and
10 adding the descriptive information to a database of currently available live
11 presentations.

12

13 **38.** A method as recited in claim 22, wherein the live presentation
14 includes an audio stream and a video stream.

15

16 **39.** One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer
17 program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim
18

19 22.

20

21 **40.** One or more computer-readable media having stored thereon a
22 computer program that, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one
23 or more processors to perform functions including:

24 identifying topic information corresponding to live content, the topic
25 information identifying a current topic of the live content; and

1 transmitting the topic information to a server to make the topic information
2 available for searching.

3
4 **41.** One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 40,
5 wherein the transmitting comprises transmitting the topic information to a search
6 server.

7
8 **42.** One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 40,
9 wherein the transmitting comprises transmitting the topic information to an
10 encoder.

11
12 **43.** One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 40, further
13 comprising transmitting a topic over indication to the server when the topic
14 information is no longer the current topic.

15
16 **44.** One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 43,
17 wherein the transmitting the topic over indication comprises transmitting, as the
18 topic over indication, a cancel topic indicator.

19
20 **45.** One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 43,
21 wherein the transmitting the topic over indication comprises transmitting, as the
22 topic over indication, new current topic information.

23
24 **46.** An apparatus comprising:
25 a bus;

1 a processor coupled to the bus; and

2 a memory, coupled to the bus, to store a plurality of instructions that are
3 executed by the processor, wherein the plurality of instructions, when executed,
4 cause the processor to,

5 receive information identifying live content,

6 maintain the information for as long as the live content is available,

7 and

8 use the information to respond to searches from a plurality of client
9 computers.

10
11 **47.** An apparatus as recited in claim 46, wherein the instructions to
12 receive information identifying live content are to receive information identifying
13 live content available from an encoder at the time the information is received.

14
15 **48.** An apparatus as recited in claim 46, further comprising a nonvolatile
16 storage device, coupled to the bus, to record the information identifying live
17 content.

18
19 **49.** An apparatus as recited in claim 46, wherein the plurality of
20 instructions, when executed, further cause the processor to store the information
21 identifying live content in the memory.

1 **50.** An apparatus as recited in claim 46, wherein the information
2 identifying live content includes a set of descriptive words and an indicator of a
3 server from which the live content is available.

4

5 **51.** An apparatus as recited in claim 50, wherein the indicator of the
6 server comprises a uniform resource locator (URL).

7

8 **52.** An apparatus as recited in claim 46, wherein the plurality of
9 instructions, when executed, further cause the processor to:

10 receive information identifying current characteristics of the live content;
11 maintain the information identifying the current characteristics for as long
12 as the characteristics describe the live content; and
13 use the information identifying the current characteristics to respond to
14 searches from the plurality of client computers.

15

16 **53.** An apparatus as recited in claim 46, wherein the plurality of
17 instructions, when executed, further cause the processor to:

18 receive information identifying current topic information identifying a topic
19 currently being presented as part of the live content;
20 receive an indication that the topic is no longer being presented;
21 maintaining the topic information for a period of time after receiving the
22 indication that the topic is no longer being presented; and
23 using the current topic information to respond to searches from the plurality
24 of computers during the period of time.

1 **54.** An apparatus as recited in claim 46, wherein the plurality of
2 instructions, when executed, further cause the processor to generate, based on the
3 information identifying live content, descriptive information to be added to a
4 database of live content.

5
6 **55.** A method comprising:
7 identifying a set of search criteria to be compared to information describing
8 a plurality of live presentations;

9 transmitting the set of search criteria to a server; and
10 receiving a list of live presentations currently in progress that match the
11 search criteria.

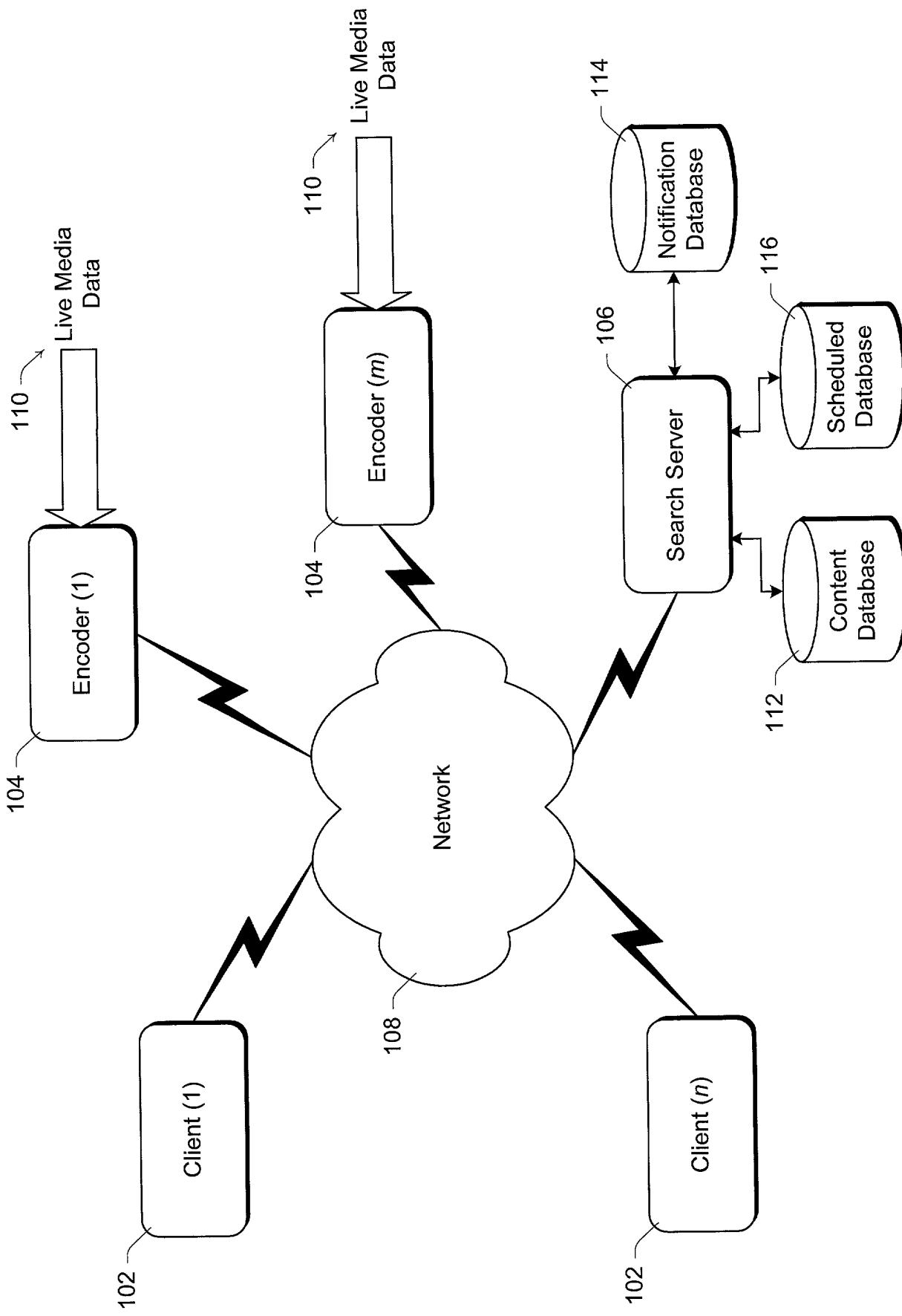
12
13 **56.** A method as recited in claim 55, further comprising:
14 selecting a live presentation from the list of live presentations; and
15 requesting that the selected live presentation be transmitted to a client
16 computer corresponding to a user making the selection.

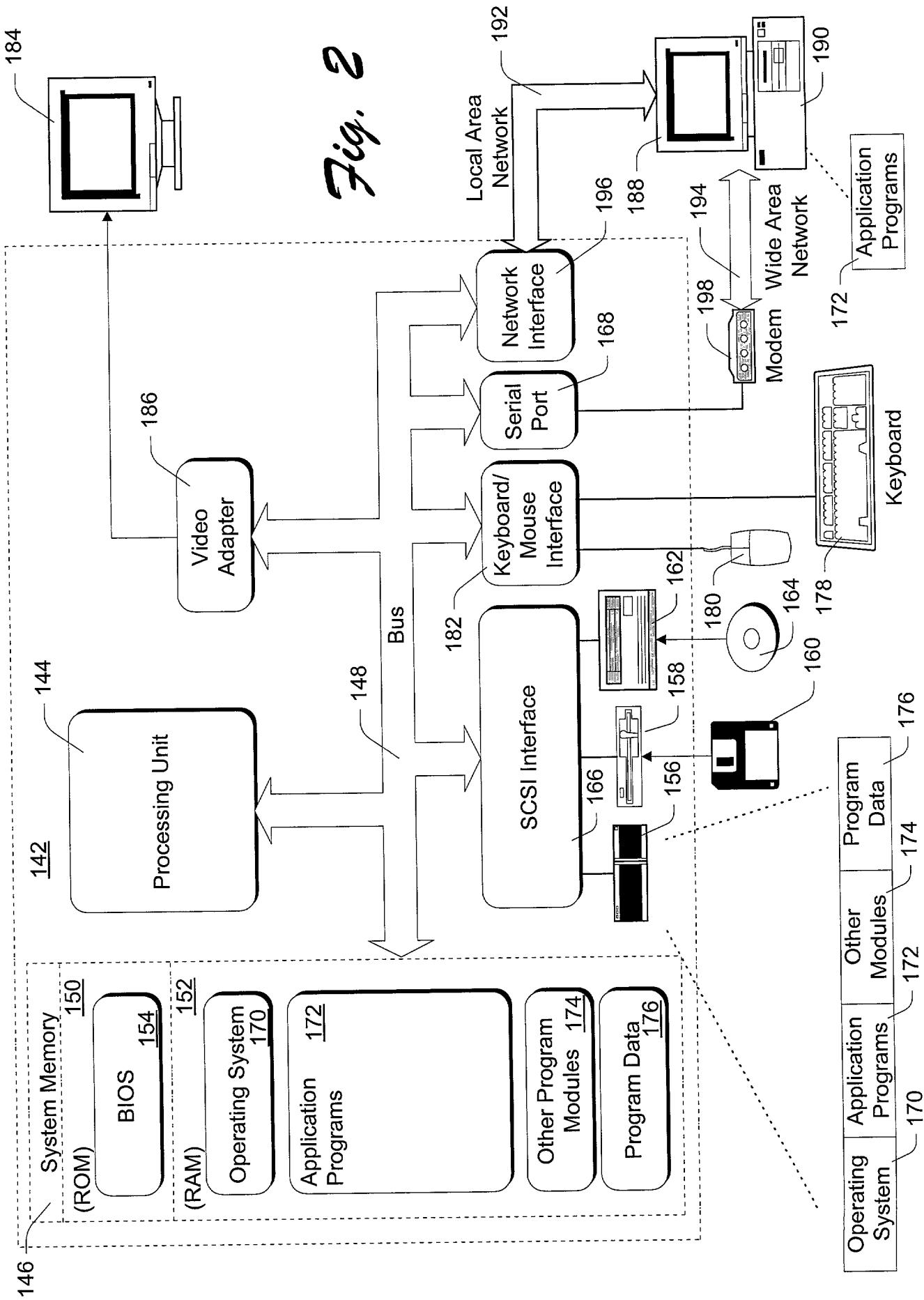
17
18 **57.** A method as recited in claim 55, further comprising:
19 transmitting a notification type to the server that indicates how a user that
20 identifies the set of search criteria should be notified by the server when a live
21 presentation is determined by the server to match the search criteria.

1 **ABSTRACT**

2 In a networked client/server system, live presentations can be streamed
3 from an encoder or other server to a client computer. Additionally, information
4 describing the presentation is registered with a search server. This information is
5 made available for user searches only for as long as the information properly
6 describes the live presentation. When the information no longer describes a
7 current live presentation, the information is no longer available for searching.

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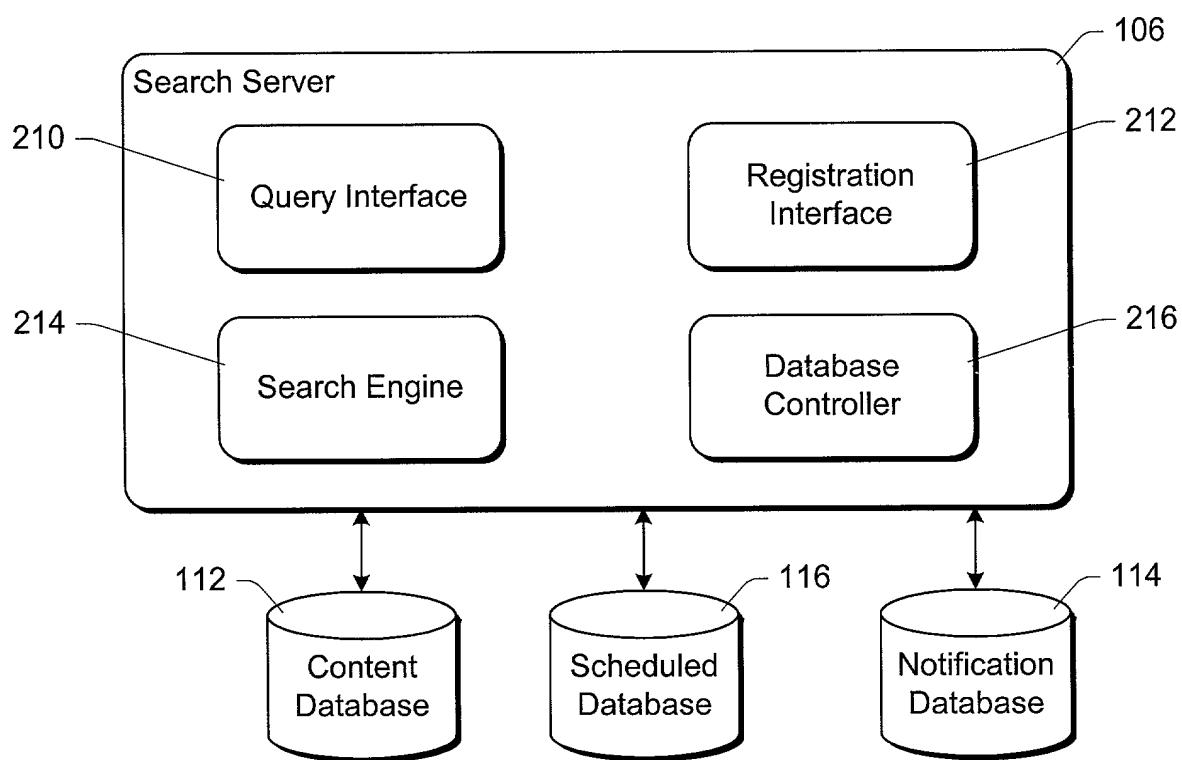


Fig. 3

Title	Source	Duration	Characteristics	Descriptive Information
Internet Training	W	2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Accessing Internet	Internet, Training, Network, Web, Authoring
College Football Summary	X	30 minutes	University of Michigan	College, Football, NCAA
Microsoft Press Conference	W, Y		Presenter - Bill Gates	Microsoft, Press Release, Bill Gates
News	Z		Sports	News, National

Fig. 4

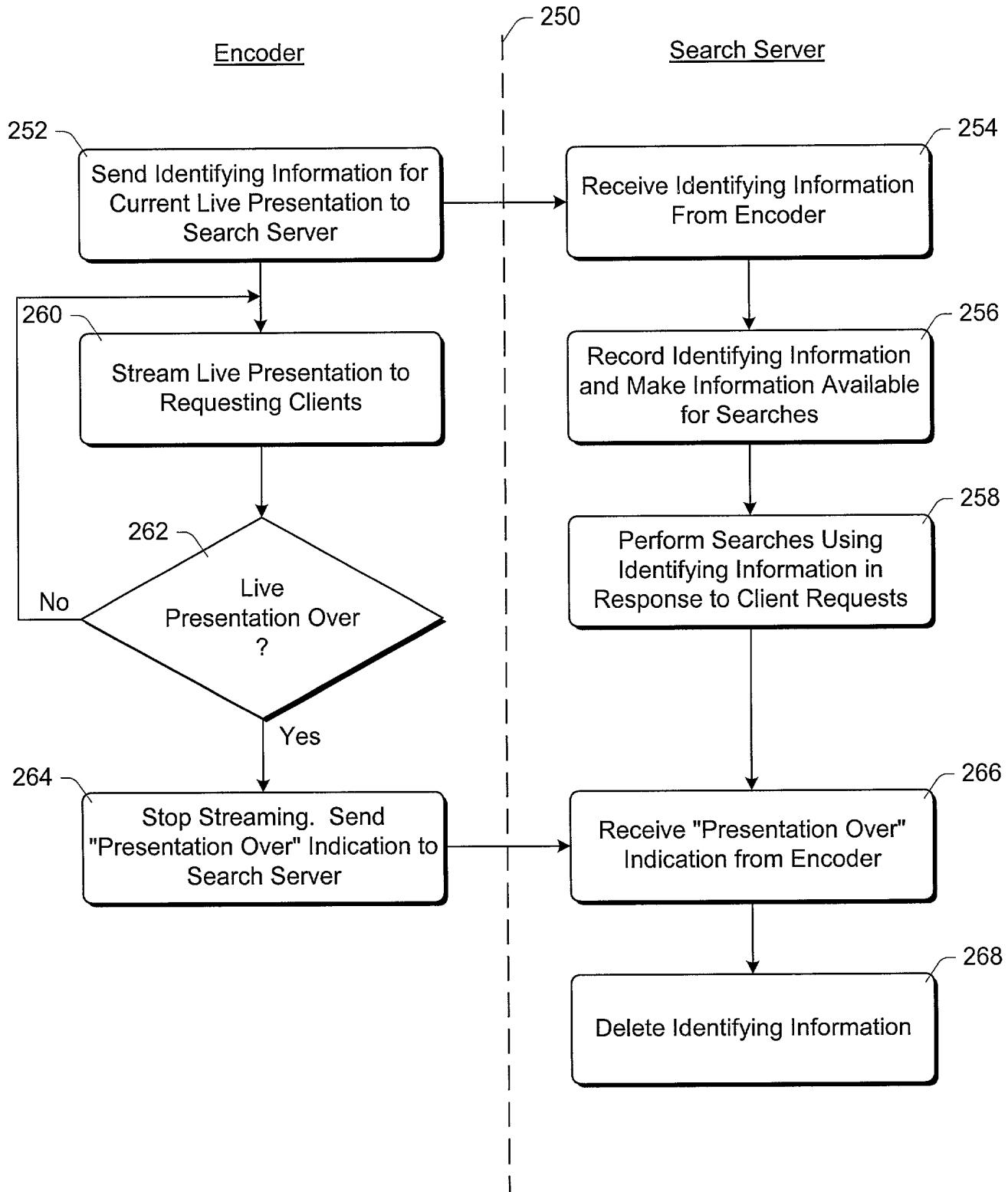
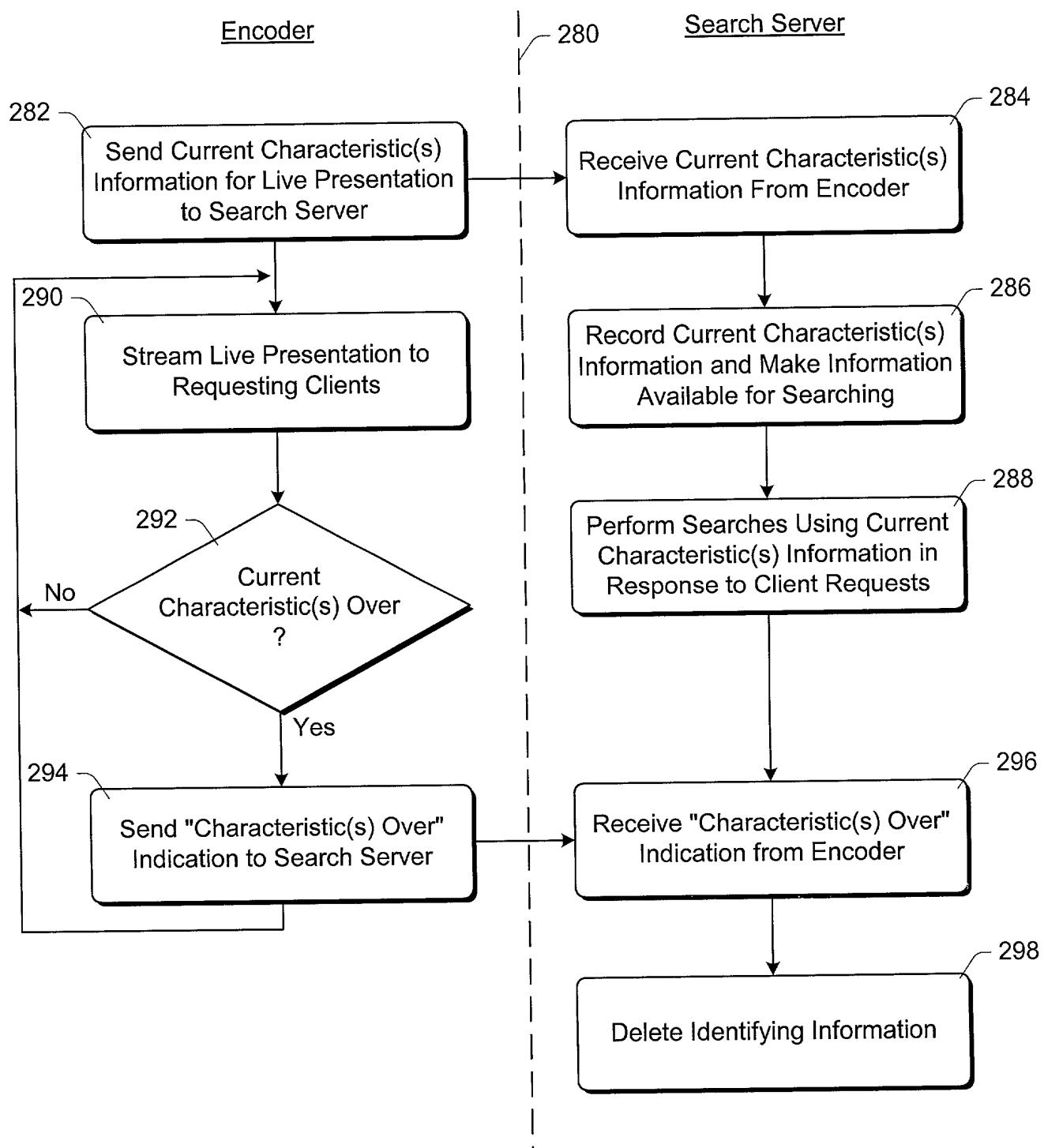


Fig. 5

*Fig. 6*

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Inventorship.....Omoigui
 Applicant Microsoft Corporation
 Attorney's Docket No. MS1-364US
 Title: Live Presentation Searching

DECLARATION FOR PATENT APPLICATION

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled "Live Presentation Searching," the specification of which is attached hereto.

I have reviewed and understand the content of the above-identified specification, including the claims.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56(a).

PRIOR FOREIGN APPLICATIONS: no applications for foreign patents or inventor's certificates have been filed prior to the date of execution of this declaration.

Power of Attorney

I appoint the following attorneys to prosecute this application and transact all future business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected with this application: Lewis C. Lee, Reg. No. 34,656; Daniel L. Hayes, Reg. No. 34,618; Allan T. Sponseller, Reg. 38,318; Steven R. Sponseller, Reg. No. 39,384; James R.

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All statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statement may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued therefrom.

* * * * *

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